

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): A feed additive for laying hens which comprises lactobionic acid or a lactobionic acid salt.
2. (original): A feed additive as claimed in claim 1, which is an eggshell reinforcing agent.
3. (original): A feed additive as claimed in claim 1, which is a stress reliever.
4. (original): A feed additive as claimed in claim 1, which is an inhibitor for lowering in egg-laying rate.
5. (original): A feed additive as claimed in claim 1, wherein the lactobionic acid salt is at least one member selected from among calcium salt, sodium salt, potassium salt, magnesium salt, iron salt, zinc salt and copper salt.
6. (original): A feed additive as claimed in claim 1, wherein the lactobionic acid salt is calcium lactobionate.
7. (original): A feed comprising a feed additive as claimed in claim 1 and a feed.

8. (currently amended): A method of reinforcing eggshells of eggs laid by hens, which comprises the step of administering an effective amount of lactobionic acid or a lactobionic acid salt in a feed additive as claimed in claim 1.

9. (currently amended): A method of relieving stress on laying hens, which comprises the step of administering an effective amount of lactobionic acid or a lactobionic acid salt in a feed additive as claimed in claim 1.

10. (currently amended): A method of inhibiting lowering in egg-laying rate in laying hens, which comprises the step of administering an effective amount of lactobionic acid or a lactobionic acid salt in a feed additive as claimed in claim 1.

11. (original): Use of lactobionic acid or a lactobionic acid salt for reinforcing eggshells of eggs laid by hens.

12. (original): Use of lactobionic acid or a lactobionic acid salt for relieving stress on laying hens.

13. (original): Use of lactobionic acid or a lactobionic acid salt for inhibiting lowering in egg-laying rate of laying hens.